



January 17, 2023

The Honorable Strom Peterson, Chair
Housing Committee
Washington State House of Representatives
Olympia, WA

The Honorable Liz Lovelett, Chair
Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs
Committee
Washington State Senate
Olympia, WA

Dear Chairs Peterson and Lovelett,

I am writing on behalf of the American Planning Association, Washington Chapter ([APA-WA](#)) to express our **support for HB 1245 and companion SB 5364**.

The 1,500 members of our chapter are planning professionals who advise elected and appointed officials on land use, housing, and transportation planning, and enforce development regulations, administer the permit process, and inform and engage with the communities we work with. Our members are broadly supportive of measures to increase housing options and increase opportunities for home ownership (see APA's [2019 Housing Policy Guide](#) for our recommended best planning practices).

About $\frac{3}{4}$ of residential urban land in many cities is zoned for single family development¹. Any work to create new housing opportunities in single family zones has the potential to have a significant impact in increasing housing options. Some cities' zoning standards continue to require very large minimum lot sizes. In other areas, even modest lot minimums prevent the prudent division of lots, such as oversized corner lots. This bill would allow the creation of new lots in existing urban areas, thereby creating new opportunities for individual ownership.

We have a few specific comments on the bill:

- The primary issue that we see with HB 1245 is that the Legislature is also considering HB 1110, which would allow the establishment of multiple housing units in single family residential zones. How this bill and HB 1110 would work in conjunction with each other is unclear.
- The bill should be amended to clarify that the created minimum lot area of 1,500 square feet and lot access must not include required critical area protection areas or buffers.
- The bill could include provisions to require Unit Lot Subdivisions, a tool by which lot standards apply to the parent lot, but new lots within could be, e.g., zero lot line.

We are eager to work with you and other interested parties to refine this important legislation. Thank you for your leadership in maintaining and improving the Growth Management Act to address our state's ongoing housing crisis.

Thank you for your consideration,

Yorik Stevens-Wajda, AICP
President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association

¹ [NY Times/Urban Footprint analysis](#)